

PRESS RELEASE

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THE PERENNIAL GARDEN: 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY BOTANICAL PRINTS
May 3 through July 31, 1983

A "flower" show of great charm is on view in the prints and drawings galleries of the Museum until July 31. The Perennial Garden draws from the Museum's collection to mount an exhibition of watercolors and handcolored engravings of flowers and fruit.

The exhibition features the art of the botanical print at the height of its popularity. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the cult of the flower garden flourished in Europe and America. Botanical prints were eagerly sought by gardeners, botanists, and collectors, for they provided precise descriptions of exotic flora. These images were also the source of motifs for embroidery and porcelain decoration, other popular art forms at the time.

Some of the earliest examples of color printing, these botanical prints are also among the finest. Their keenly observed subjects--lilies, peonies, camellias, and many varieties of roses--are rendered and printed with great care and delicacy.

Louise Richards, chief curator of prints and drawings, selected more than sixty images for this unusual summer show.

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